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Attachments: Have_You_Ever_Tried_to_Sell_a_Diamond_Edwad_Jay_Epstein_The_Atlantic_Feb._1,_1982.docx;

The_EPA's_emissions_plan_should_be_just_the_b_eginning_Editorial_Board_TWP_June_2,_2014.docx; José_James_bio.docx;

U.S._Adds_217,000_Jobs_in_May,_Unemployment_Rate_Stays_at_6.3%_Dunstan_Prial_Fox_News_June_6,_2014.docx;

Univarsity_of_Texas_Austin_Commencement_Address_2014_Adm._William_H._McRave_[REDACTED].docx; FUN_FACTS_ABOUT_DIAMONDS_June_15,_2014.docx

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DEAR FRIEND.....

 BERGDAHL

If you thought that Karl Rove's 2004 Swift Boating of John Kerry's Vietnam service record in the US Navy was pretty disgusting, the recent smears against President Barack Obama for winning Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl's release have descended to a new low. Instead of rejoicing in the homecoming of an American soldier who spent five years as a captive of the Taliban, the Republican response has been one of contempt and condemnation. There'll be no welcome home festivities in Hailey, Idaho for the 28-year-old Bergdahl, not with the FBI confirming that his family has been receiving threats. Instead, he has become the center of a media storm of which he is unaware as he recuperates at the US military hospital in Landstuhl, Germany and now in a military hospital in Texas. Many of the same politicians and pundits who have made such hay over the four lost American lives in Benghazi are now claiming that it might have been better to leave an American POW behind simply because they don't like his politics or that he had gone AWOL.

Sceptics, including former members of Private Bergdahl's platoon, toured TV studios to call him a deserter who walked off his base unarmed, and—they allege—cost at least six comrades their lives during months of searching. They want him court-martialled. Bergdahl's supporters say he is being blamed for what may have been unrelated combat deaths. They describe an intense young man home-schooled in rural Idaho, who after dabbling in ballet and Buddhism joined the army but grew disgusted with war. The family does not easily fit into America's tribal politics. Bergdahl's father, Robert, is a stern Christian conservative, but grew a bushy beard and studied Islam during his son's captivity. Celebrating the prisoner swap next to President Obama in the White House garden, Mr. Bergdahl used a Koranic invocation and some Pushtu phrases, saying his son's English was rusty. This did not help the Bergdahl cause.

Whatever was on then-Private Bowe Bergdahl's mind on June 30, 2009 when he left Observation Post Mest Malak in southeastern Afghanistan and wandered off unarmed toward the Pakistan border has little bearing on his subsequent status as a prisoner of war. A faction of the Taliban held Bergdahl for five years and the nation should be rejoicing in the fact that he is alive and relatively unharmed. If under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) he is found to have violated Army rules and regulations then he'll be dealt with accordingly. That is a separate issue from whether President Obama had an obligation to do whatever he could to win his release. And as far as pinning the deaths of specific servicemen on searching for Bergdahl that is also something best left to the Army to sort out.

As one U.S. Navy veteran put it: *"Last time I checked, the punishment specified for violation of UCMJ Article 85 (or Article 86 depending on Bergdahl's intentions) isn't to throw him to our enemies!"* If the Talibs who held Bergdahl for the past five years had cut off his head and put the video of it on the Internet would Chris Wallace of Fox News be asking on his show whether or not the young Army soldier deserved the death penalty? Or would he and others be right now slamming Obama Benghazi-style for losing a brave American soldier? And what's the Army supposed to do? Put the slogan: *"Join the Army and If You're Captured We'll Leave You to the Enemy"* on its recruitment posters? Those voices on the Right who attacked Obama for not doing enough to free Bergdahl turned on a dime to trash the President for doing exactly what they had previously demanded.

This is a whole disgusting level below the normal day-to-day hypocrisy of American politics. These responses are the product of a moral sickness -- and most pathetic are the ones who call themselves pro-life or who obsess over what they say is the loss of freedom in this country, yet they'd rather see their fellow human Bowe Bergdahl lose his freedom or even die all because of their blind hatred of the man in the Oval Office. Look, if the Army wants to investigate the facts surrounding Bergdahl's disappearance then they should do that (I doubt it would result in more than a slap on the wrist in the reality-based world, but we seem to be losing our grip on reality... so who knows).

Again, the bottom line is that we really don't know what Bowe Bergdahl's mind was when he walk off the safety of his post in Afghanistan. Obviously, if it was his intention to walk to Pakistan one would seriously question his sanity at that time. We know that our soldiers are suffering PTSD in unprecedented numbers. So is this young Private a criminal deserter if it is found that he suffered a nervous breakdown? And should a soldier who wandered off as a result of mental illness be vilified? So why are so many people jumping the gun to criticize both this young soldier and the President who made the tough call to arrange his release?

As one fairly knowledgeable chap said about the Bergdahl affair -- *"We don't leave Americans behind. That's unequivocal."* That wasn't some knee-jerk Obama apologist in Congress that was former Gen. Stanley McChrystal, Bergdahl's supreme commanding officer when he was captured in 2009, and -- if you recall -- not a big fan of the president. But he does know right from wrong. Remember that Israel traded more than 1,000 prisoners, including a sizable number of Palestinians detained for allegedly murderous acts of terrorism, to win back just ONE of its citizens. Say what you will about the Israeli government's policies, but the Israeli citizen's value human life. I don't know what America values anymore.

Did Bergdahl make a horrible mistake in judgment, or worse, when he left his base? Probably. Did some American troops die in combat because of the search for Bergdahl or related events? Possibly. But we should also talk about the fact that we sent thousands of American soldiers into a war that has

lasted a remarkable 13 years, and the longer that a war lasts, the more heartbreaking, soul-crushing things are going to happen. It's even more tragic when our leaders can't even articulate why our troops -- Bergdahl, the ones who went looking for him, the ones who will be there even after the war was supposed to end later this year -- are even in Afghanistan anymore. With this level of obfuscation and the overall lack of understanding on the part of the American public about what has been going on in our name in Afghanistan all these years is it any wonder that opinion polls show that 80 percent of Americans say they want the U.S. military out of there. Yet Fox and other elements of the Republican Noise Machine, with the help of a significant number of Democrats, who independently and together are play-acting as if the war in Afghanistan is still as popular back home as if it was World War Two.

Behind the Madness in Iraq



Now Tikrit falls to Islamist terrorists: Hundreds of thousands flee as second Iraqi city is seized by the extremist warlord who is more 'virulent and violent than Bin Laden' - and will Baghdad be next?

- • Islamist militants effectively took control of oil-rich Mosul yesterday after four days of heavy fighting
- • Today they seized power in Saddam Hussein's home city of Tikrit - they also freed hundreds of prisoners
- • Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, 43, known as Adu Dua, has emerged as one of the world's most lethal terrorist leaders
- • The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant now controls territory in eastern Syria and western and central Iraq
- • More than half a million Iraqis have been displaced sparking a major refugee crisis
- • Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Maliki asked parliament to declare a state of emergency to give him more power
- • Tonight Turkey warned it will retaliate if any of its 48 citizen taken hostage at its embassy in Mosul are harmed
- • UN: 300,000 in Iraq became refugees this week
- • Baghdad Braces as Capital City Residents Prepare for a siege

Iraq is under siege after Al Qaeda-inspired jihadists seized control of Saddam Hussein's home town of Tikrit and closed in on the country's biggest oil refinery. Coming less than 24 hours after the country's second city Mosul was overrun by the militants, there were fears that the loss of Tikrit could open the way for an assault on Baghdad just 80 miles to the south. Western security firms working in the capital are said to have been put on high alert amid fears that insurgents will target the 'Green Zone' where most of the foreign embassies are based. As Mosul and Tikrit, several other northern towns were reported to have fallen to the spectacular offensive by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Warlord Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi has seized control of another Iraqi provincial capital just a day of gaining power in the country's second biggest city Mosul.

The U.S. had no business invading Iraq. We toppled a dictatorship on a false 9/11 rationale, which plunged Iraq into a sectarian civil war inside a war with the United States. We left behind a vengeance-driven Shiite regime aligned with Iran. Now the sectarian war in Syria is enlarging into a regional one. The primary blame for this disaster is on the Bush administration, but also on all those who succumbed to a Superpower Syndrome, which said we could redesign the Middle East. There is no reason whatsoever to justify further loss of American lives or tax dollars on a conflict that we do not understand and that started before the United States was born. These are the words of Tom Hayden the Former State Senator and leader of sixties peace, justice and environmental movement and currently Director of the Peace and Justice Resource Center and the ex-husband of a young Jane Fonda back in the day.

Hayden urges anti-war networks to send online messages to Congress opposing any U.S. military re-intervention in Iraq. Because as he says, *"voices need to be amplified to help President Barack Obama stave off the most irrational forces during this crisis."* He continues on, *"....we need to construct a narrative that blocks the hawks from blaming Obama for "losing" Iraq, and turns the focus on the neo-conservatives, Republicans, and Democratic hawks who took this country into a sea of blood."*

As this immediate crisis unfolds, we must act to strip away certain delusions. The least of these, though still irritating, is the view of many visible anti-war *"radicals"* that says the United States never really withdrew from Iraq, but instead secretly left behind tens of thousands of Special Forces in disguise. This silly notion was meant to refute the belief that Obama had *"ended"* the war. Where are those secret U.S. legions today? Not on the battlefield obviously. Now as we engage in the discussion of *"losing"* Iraq, it is not helpful to claim that the U.S. never withdrew. Instead we have to defend the withdrawal and its consequences, which will reopen deep divisions in America's political culture.

By now exposed is the widespread delusion of the neo-liberals and neo-conservatives that we could construct, through force of arms, a democratic and unified Iraqi state in which sectarian divisions would float away in a flood of free enterprise and oil revenue, when the truth is that a sectarian struggle long preceded the American invasion, was held in check only by the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, and was reignited by the U.S. military overthrow of a Sunni-led regime.

Hayden again. "It is profoundly shameful to hear American officials cluck-cluck about the supposed *"excesses"* of the Shiite al-Maliki regime that they installed; the thousands of Sunnis being marginalized, imprisoned, tortured, denied employment and political representation, when all this revenge was foretold and could not be forestalled forever. There is no doubt that Iraq was a Sunni-dominated dictatorship under Saddam, but it also had a middle class, higher education, and an economy that employed many people in state-owned enterprises. Though a dictatorship, it was prosperous for many, at least according to Middle East standards. Its enemies were very understandably the Shiite population, but also the crackpot Republican neo-cons with their faith-based privatization schemes, and many in the Israeli and American national security complex that long feared armed Arab nationalism. The latter group's support for the Shiites was purely opportunistic. It was based on yet another delusion, that religious Islam could be managed while Arab secular nationalism posed the greater security threat."

The current conflict in Iraq is a civil war is the result of rampant corruption by the government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki whose his ruling party have behaved like thugs, excluding the Sunnis from power, using the army, police forces and militias to terrorize their opponents. The insurgency the Maliki government faces today was utterly predictable because, in fact, it happened before. From

2003 onward, Iraq faced a Sunni insurgency that was finally tamped down by Gen. David Petraeus, who said explicitly at the time that the core element of his strategy was political, bringing Sunni tribes and militias into the fold. The surge's success, he often noted, bought time for a real power-sharing deal in Iraq that would bring the Sunnis into the structure of the government. Except that not only did Maliki not try to do broad power-sharing, he reneged on all the deals that had been made, stopped paying the Sunni tribes and militias, and started persecuting key Sunni officials.

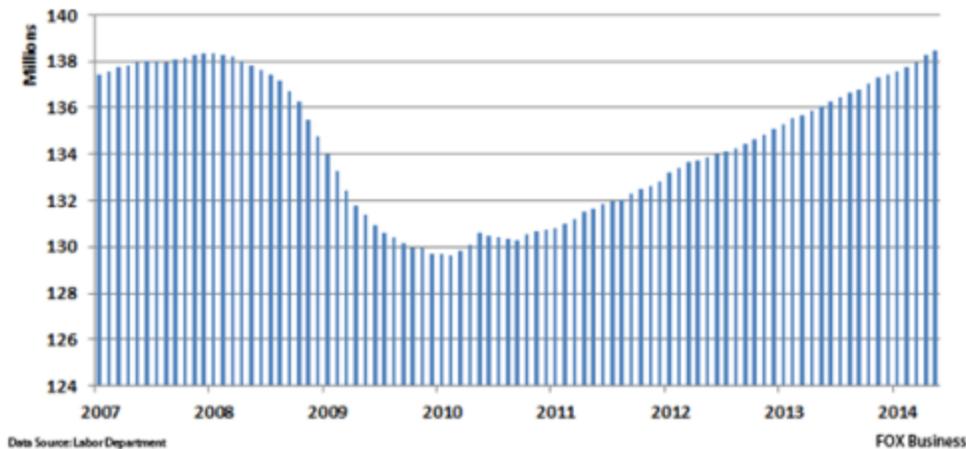
But how did Maliki come to be prime minister of Iraq? He was the product of a series of momentous decisions made by the Bush administration. Having invaded Iraq with a small force — what the expert Tom Ricks called “*the worst war plan in American history*” — the administration needed to find local allies. It quickly decided to destroy Iraq's Sunni ruling establishment and empower the hardline Shiite religious parties that had opposed Saddam Hussein. This meant that a structure of Sunni power that had been in the area for centuries collapsed. These moves — to disband the army, dismantle the bureaucracy and purge Sunnis in general — might have been more consequential than the invasion itself, because when the central power is sufficiently weakened, there is no real civil society to hold the polity together, no real sense of common identity...The state then disintegrates...into a chaos of squabbling, feuding, fighting sects, tribes, regions, and parties.

The turmoil in the Middle East is often called a sectarian war. But really it is better described as “*the Sunni revolt*.” Across the region, from Iraq to Syria, one sees armed Sunni gangs that have decided to take on the non-Sunni forces that, in their view, oppress them. The Bush administration often justified its actions by pointing out that the Shiites are the majority in Iraq and so they had to rule. But the truth is that the borders of these lands are porous, and while the Shiites are numerous in Iraq — Maliki's party actually won a plurality, not a majority — they are a tiny minority in the Middle East as a whole. It is outside support — from places as varied as Saudi Arabia and Turkey — that sustains the Sunni revolt. You can see this today with Iran now sending troops in an attempt to oust Maliki, while the Sunnis in Saudi Arabia, Turkey and elsewhere in the Middle East are supporting the insurgents.

An Iraq split into three semi-autonomous mini-states, or an Iraq in civil war, means that the kind of threat posed by Hussein...is unlikely to rise again. This is what is presently happening. Because of the sectarian war in Syria, the Sunnis of Iraq have a massive “*rear base*” from which to launch their insurgency. By one estimate in the New York Times, their fighting force is only 3,000 to 5,000 combatants, a tiny fraction of the massive and rapidly crumbling Iraqi army. The march to Baghdad may well be blocked militarily, unless the al-Maliki regime simply crumbles from within. But Iraq will be divided between its Sunnis in the Northern provinces, the Kurds in Kurdistan, and Shiites in the south, who may at any time split and revolt against al-Maliki under the lead of the Sadrists.

The belief that the United States can somehow impose order among this division and chaos is delusional. As for who to blame, remember Secretary Powell's famous warning about the consequences of an American invasion of Iraq to President Bush 43, “***if you break it you own it.***” We definitely broke Iraq and trying to blame President Obama for not being able to clean up the mess and put together the pieces left by the Bush/Cheney Administration or even blaming them is not going to make things better. But what could definitely make things worse is to side with al Maliki and Iran against the Sunnis in Iraq, which will be interpreted as an assault against Sunnis elsewhere. As such, the prudent thing at the moment is for President Obama and the United States to stay out of the fray even though the real scenario cannot be explained to the American public as it is far too complicated, even though the scapegoating will begin.

Major Milestone U.S. Employment Back to Pre-Crisis Levels



With three major shootings last week, the hoopla over the swapping of five Guantanamo prisoners for the release of US soldier Bowe Bergdahl and the possibility of California Crome winning the *Belmont Stakes* and becoming the 12 winning horse of *The Triple Crown* in history, almost unnoticed was the **Department of Labor's** announcement that the **U.S. added 217,000 jobs in May**, with the **unemployment rate of 6.3%** staying the same as it was in April when 288,000 jobs were created, far more than had been expected. With May's additions the economy has now **recovered all of the 8.7 million jobs** lost during the recession that followed the crisis. Since the crisis the economic recovery has occurred in fits and starts, with key sectors such as labor and housing appearing to gain traction only to stumble repeatedly. The May report suggests sustained momentum in the labor sector because it represents the fourth consecutive month in which more than 200,000 jobs were created. The monthly average for jobs created during the past year now stands at 197,000, just below the 200,000 figure many economists have said would make a significant dent in the unemployment rate.

Although the news was good all is not rosy because the labor force participation rate was unchanged in May, at 62.8%, the Labor Department reported. The participation rate hasn't moved much since October but is down by 0.6% during the past year. The tepid labor force participation rate, which has hovered for months at its lowest level in four decades, is a primary reason the unemployment rate has fallen rapidly in the years since the recession ended in 2009. David Kelly, chief global strategist for JPMorgan Funds, said weakness in the labor force participation rate is a reminder of "some sluggish U.S. economic fundamentals." "Lack of investment spending in recent years has sapped productivity growth while the retirement of the baby-boom is largely responsible for the weakness in labor force growth and neither of these problems are likely to be remedied over the next few years," Kelly said ahead of the release of Friday's labor report.

The labor force participation rate, a key gauge of the percentage of working-age Americans currently employed, has come under close scrutiny as large numbers of workers have left the workforce each month either due to retirement or out of frustration in finding a decent job. Given the Fed's heightened interest in inflation recently, economists are currently keeping a close eye on monthly wage figures. In May, average hourly earnings for all non-farm employees rose by 5 cents to \$24.38. Over the past 12 months, average hourly earnings have risen by 2.1%, slightly higher than the Fed's target inflation rate. Inflation has hovered at 1% for months, a full percentage point below the Fed's target rate of 2%. Central bank policy makers have said they won't start raising interest rates until inflation approaches that target. Wages will play a key role in pushing inflation higher toward the Fed's desired threshold. When wages move higher workers spend more money, which creates demand for goods and ultimately pushes prices higher. All of these elements are signs of a strengthening economy, just what the Fed needs to begin raising interest rates.

The same people who criticize President Obama for the long recovery forget that they did not support his efforts during his first term to do a much larger jobs program which economists say would have added more than a million additional jobs, lowered unemployment quickly but would have helped address some of the infrastructure decay that is a going to a major problem in the future. And for my friends who believe hasn't been doing a good job, I truly don't understand. Over the six years that President Obama has been at the helm, his policies has saved our major banks, Big Three Automakers, generated more than 8 million new private sector jobs without growing the public sector employment, financial markets at an all-time high, got us out of Iraq and have us on tract to be out of Afghanistan before the end of his second term. And yes, he has made mistakes but one of the things that we should be happy about is that he has kept us out of unnecessary conflicts, those that John McCain and others advocated. We received good news last Friday and it is a shame that few people heard and appreciated it.



Tuesday night marked the first time since 1899 -- you read that correctly -- that a House majority leader has lost a primary election. It was just yesterday when pundits on talk radio were discussing how Eric Cantor would be the next Speaker of the House when John Boehner decided he was tired of herding cats. Instead of an easy victory, Cantor lost in a huge humiliation. And Defeat for the Republican establishment, its leadership and sane Republicans. And a sweet, sweet vindication that the Republican strategy of stoking up faux-populism, of just saying no, of never proposing a solution to any problem, has blown up so spectacularly because in their gorgeously gerrymandered districts, people -- voters -- have bought the line. They believe, as Ronald Reagan ruinously said, that government is the problem. The endpoint of this insane ideology is the election of Tea Partiers who are not interested in governing at all but in dismantling government itself. And the institutional Republicans, the Eric Cantors and the like who gambled that obstructionism alone would give them power, are seeing their fortunes turn and their majority become meaningless.

So as an unabashed liberal or progressive or whatever you want to call me, and although I would like to luxuriate in the natural conclusion of Republican obstructionism has backfired. I can't. I can't because no matter what I think about Eric Canter's policies, compared to most of the Tea Party members he could be considered one of the adults in Congress. He at times "*tried*" to work with the Democrats and the White House. And although I disagreed with many of his proposals, at least he tried to make government work, which is more than I can say for many of his Republican constitutes whose sole goal is to eviscerate the Federal Government to the point that all it will be able to do is appropriate funding for "*anything*" military. Yes, the Republicans may be able to take back the Senate. But what will that power mean? Absolutely, positively nothing, because they'll be stuck with Tea Party types who doesn't want any government action on any issue. They want the current trend to continue, where states pick up more and more of the tab, where individual municipalities push forward minimum wage laws because the federal government is paralyzed. Meanwhile the gap between the rich and the poor widens every day, and Republicans have convinced many rural Americans that the problem is the tax rate on the wealthy.

So unlike when the Republicans controlled Congress in the 2000s and were able to run us into the fiscal ground with wars and tax cuts and federal control of education, none of that steamrolling will be

happening this time around. The Tea Partiers will just keep voting on the repeal of Obamacare and praying that Hillary doesn't run and praying that God will deliver them a savior who can somehow win the general election by building border fences with his own two hands, eliminating the department of education and instituting a flat tax. Or as Paul Ryan calls it "*broadening the tax base,*" otherwise known as taxing the poor. But pretty soon the sane Republicans whom I have to believe is still a majority in the Party, will understand that monster that they have create has destroyed the institution that is Congress and now these inmates would like to run the asylum. Let's remember that Eric Cantor is not a RINO (Republican In Name Only). He is a card carrying Ultra Conservative who time and again has done whatever he could to block legislation that might grow the country's economy and give the White House and Democrats a win.

As such, with Eric Cantor's loss and David Brat's vehement opposition to immigration reform, it seems likely that we will see the Tea Party and far-right members of the GOP push the party even farther to the right than it already is. The 2nd-most powerful person in the House will no longer have a seat, so there will be a mad scramble for power among House Republicans. At the same time, Tea Partiers will claim that Cantor's defeat shows that the party needs to promote 'true conservatives' from deep red states into leadership positions, rather than placing more moderate Representatives from swing and blue states to lead the House. They will state that the party's platform and agenda needs to veer towards the extreme. Any thoughts towards moderation and compromise need to be nixed. Because if you think that politics are partisan now, wait until the guys who hate government takeover. Although as a liberal Democrat, it would nice to gloat over Eric Cantor's defeat, I don't because he may be the one of the last Republicans willing to try to make government work. The rule in politics should be that if "*my*" guy doesn't win hopefully your guy is almost as good. And with all of the Majority Leader's failings and things that I may disagree with, it is difficult to believe that David Brat will ever become an Eric Cantor....

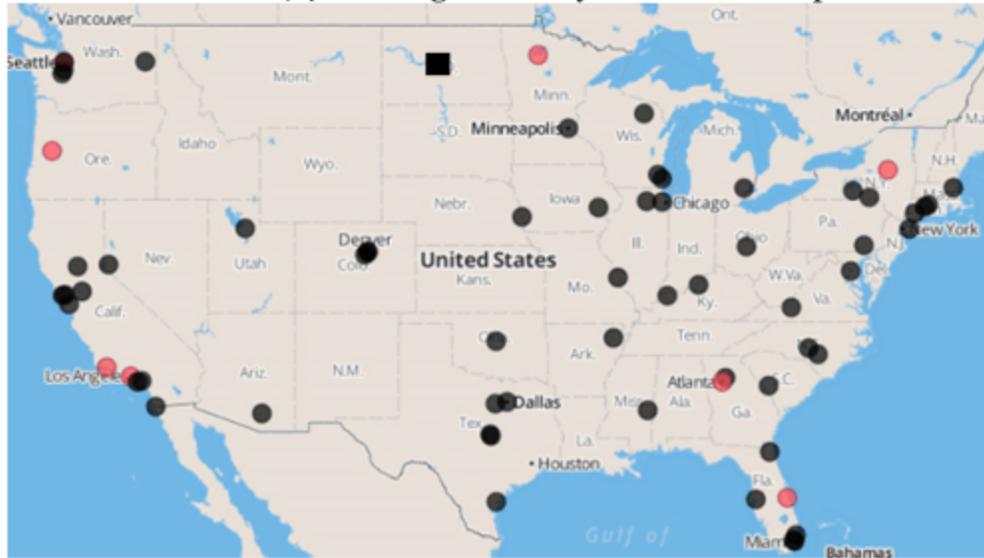
There have been at least 74 shootings at schools since Newtown

In a chilling and all too familiar scene, Tuesday's school shooting in Oregon was at least the 74th instance of shots being fired on school grounds or in school buildings since the late-2012 elementary school shooting in Newtown, Conn. Again, the Troutdale, Oregon school shooting makes it the 74th gun violence in U.S. schools in the last 18 months since the Dec. 14, 2012, Newtown shooting. The average school year typically lasts about 180 days, which means there have been roughly 270 school days, or 54 weeks, of class since the shooting at Newtown. With 74 total incidents over that period, the nation is averaging well over a shooting per school week. And if this isn't an epidemic then nothing is, as there is no other country on earth with school gun violence on this scale.

According to a list maintained by the group **Everytown for Gun Safety**, which advocates for policies it believes limit gun violence there have been at least 37 shootings on school grounds this year, which is just barely half over. All told, there has been nearly one shooting per week in the year and a half since Newtown. Everytown identifies a school shooting as any instance in which a firearm was discharged within a school building or on school grounds, sourced to multiple news reports per incident. Therefore, the data isn't limited to mass shootings like Newtown — it includes assaults, homicides, suicides and even accidental shootings. Of the shootings, 35 took place at a college or university, while a majority 39 took place in K-12 schools.

Georgia, which passed an expansive pro-gun law this year, has been site of the most incidents on Everytown's list, with 10 shootings reported. Florida was next, with seven. Tennessee claimed five, and North Carolina and California was home to four each. Atlanta was the only city that had three such shootings. Six other cities had two shootings. All told, 31 states are represented on the list of shootings in schools or on school campuses or grounds. A February analysis by the group of a list of school shootings since Newtown (which was later expanded) found that nearly half resulted in at least one death. Three in four shooters obtained guns at home, at least in instances in which the firearm's source could be determined.

Here's a map of the cities where the 74 shootings on Everytown's list took place.



The shooting happened at about 8:11 (ET) at Reynolds High School in Troutdale, about 12 miles east of Portland. The city has a population of 16,400 people. When it started, student Hannah League ducked into a classroom, where she and others huddled in a corner with no lights -- hiding. When the shooting started at her high school near Portland, Oregon, early Tuesday, student Jaimie Infante didn't recognize the sound of a gunshot. She thought maybe somebody had dropped a book. In reality, a lone gunman had opened fire at the school, killing one student and forcing others to flee. An assistant principal told students to go into lockdown mode. A teacher, who suffered non-life-threatening injuries, was treated at the scene. The suspected gunman was found dead at the school. According to multiple law enforcement officials, the shooter was a student at the school. The gunman appears to have died from a self-inflicted wound, the sources told CNN. Speaking to reporters, Troutdale Police Department Chief Scott Anderson said he could not confirm how the shooter died although it was speculated that he died from a self-inflicted gunshot. Officials identified the student killed as 14-year-old Emilio Hoffman, a freshman.

The shooting, the latest in a long string of school shootings, sparked reaction nationwide. *"Our hearts go out to the Reynolds HS community. How many more students must we lose before committing to reduce gun violence in our schools?"* Secretary of Education Arne Duncan asked on his Twitter account. Speaking in Washington, President Barack Obama with anger and frustration said the nation should be ashamed of its inability to get tougher gun restrictions through Congress in the aftermath of mass shootings that he said have become commonplace in America. *"Our levels of gun violence are off the charts. There's no advanced, developed country on Earth that would put up with this,"* he said in response to a question about gun violence. Most members of Congress are *"terrified"* of the National Rifle Association, the President said, adding that nothing will change until public opinion demands it. *"The country has to do some soul searching about this. This is becoming the norm, and we take it for granted, in ways that as a parent are terrifying to me,"* Obama said.

As the President pointed out that – “*we are the only developed country where school gun violence is happening on this scale.... and that this is now happening once a week.... it is now only a one-day story....*” And the sad thing he was right because by Wednesday morning the shooting was pushed to the bad pages as every major headline led with the **Virginia Primary Results: Eric Cantor Stunned By Tea Party Challenger Dave Brat In Massive Upset**. Obviously the primary defeat of the House Majority Leader and second most powerful Republican in Congress is an extremely important story, as it shows that when Eric Cantor, who time and again has blocked almost every piece of legislation either proposed by Democrats or supported by the President, can't earn the Republican nomination, it's clear the GOP has redefined 'far right.' But what about our children? On top of this, as one teacher pointed out, “**it could have been worse.**” Further evidence of that, another student at the school was discovered also carrying a gun on the same day of the shooting. The NRA is crazy and something has to be done..... Arming guards and teachers are not the only answers, nor are they the best and to be honest, as they may may be the worse.... Like the President I am appalled and so should you.... **and this is my rant of the week.**

WEEK'S READINGS

 engagement proposal wedding diamond ring

Having been part of an investment syndicate that bought a diamond mine fifteen years ago, I took a special interest of an article from February 1982 in **The Atlantic** by Edward Jay Epstein — **Have You Ever Tried to Sell a Diamond?** — on how an unruly market could undo the work of the giant **De Beers** cartel controlled by the Oppenheimer family in South Africa from World War I to 2011 when it sold the entirety of their 40% stake in **De Beers** to **Anglo American plc** thereby increasing Anglo American's ownership of the company to 85% and its decades-long ad campaign; famous advertising line “*A Diamond is Forever.*”

The creation of the idea that diamonds are rare and valuable, and are essential signs of esteem — is a relatively recent development in the history of the diamond trade. Until the late nineteenth century, diamonds were found only in a few riverbeds in India and in the jungles of Brazil, and the entire world production of gem diamonds amounted to a few pounds a year. In 1870, however, huge diamond mines were discovered near the Orange River, in South Africa, where diamonds were soon being scooped out by the ton. Suddenly, the market was deluged with diamonds. The British financiers who had organized the South African mines quickly realized that their investment was endangered; diamonds had little intrinsic value — and their price depended almost entirely on their scarcity. The financiers feared that when new mines were developed in South Africa, diamonds would become at best only semiprecious gems.

The major investors in the diamond mines realized that they had no alternative but to merge their interests into a single entity that would be powerful enough to control production and perpetuate the illusion of scarcity of diamonds. The instrument they created, in 1888, was called De Beers Consolidated Mines, Ltd., incorporated in South Africa. As De Beers took control of all aspects of the world diamond trade, it assumed many forms. In London, it operated under the innocuous name of the Diamond Trading Company. In Israel, it was known as “*The Syndicate.*” In Europe, it was called

the "C.S.O." -- initials referring to the **Central Selling Organization**, which was an arm of the **Diamond Trading Company**. And in black Africa, it disguised its South African origins under subsidiaries with names like **Diamond Development Corporation and Mining Services, Inc.** At its height -- for most of this century -- it not only either directly owned or controlled all the diamond mines in southern Africa but also owned diamond trading companies in England, Portugal, Israel, Belgium, Holland, and Switzerland.

De Beers proved to be the most successful cartel arrangement in the annals of modern commerce. While other commodities, such as gold, silver, copper, rubber, and grains, fluctuated wildly in response to economic conditions, diamonds have continued, with few exceptions, to advance upward in price every year since the Depression. Indeed, the cartel seemed so superbly in control of prices -- and unassailable -- that, in the late 1970s, even speculators began buying diamonds as a guard against the vagaries of inflation and recession. The diamond invention is far more than a monopoly for fixing diamond prices; it is a mechanism for converting tiny crystals of carbon into universally recognized tokens of wealth, power, and romance. To achieve this goal, De Beers had to control demand as well as supply. Both women and men had to be made to perceive diamonds not as marketable precious stones but as an inseparable part of courtship and married life. To stabilize the market, De Beers had to endow these stones with a sentiment that would inhibit the public from ever reselling them. The illusion had to be created that diamonds were forever -- "*forever*" in the sense that they should never be resold.

If you're new to the diamond world you may not even know synthetic diamonds exist. The fact is they have been around for decades -- being used as tools in optoelectronics and nanotechnology. They are grown in an industrial laboratory over just a matter of days. Only recently have scientists started marketing them as jewelry. Synthetic diamonds are diamonds grown in a laboratory. They duplicate naturally-occurring diamonds in atomic structure and physical properties, making them real diamonds. Though they have distinctive growth features which prevent them from being identical to natural diamonds, the only way to tell the difference is by using very sophisticated scientific instrumentation found in major gem-testing laboratories.

Synthetic diamonds are now commercially available in a range of sizes, shapes and colors. Labs are able to produce colorless and near colorless diamonds weighing up to 1/2-carat, and fancy-color diamonds weighing as much as 3-carats. Because these diamonds are grown in a controlled lab in a matter of days, synthetic diamonds are much cheaper than natural diamonds. Although consumers have few retailers to choose from, there are two pioneers in the field currently selling synthetic diamonds for 50 percent less than naturally mined diamonds.

The biggest problem today for De Beers is when synthetic diamonds are mixed in with natural stones. Such adulteration happened two years ago with the appearance in 2011 of a large batch of synthetic diamonds believed by their dealer to be natural. An analysis by a grading lab revealed that the entire batch was synthetic," according to a 2012 report on the global diamond industry by Bain & Co. and the Antwerp World Diamond Center. "The event was unsettling, raising concerns that high-quality counterfeit diamonds had slipped into the market. The batch in question was created through a process known as chemical vapor deposition (CVD), which produces stones that a diamond dealer cannot distinguish from natural diamonds without special equipment," the report said.

But De Beers should be cognizant of Tulip mania when in 1593 tulips were brought from Turkey and introduced to the Dutch. The novelty of the new flower made it widely sought after and therefore fairly

pricey. After a time, the tulips contracted a non-fatal virus known as mosaic, which didn't kill the tulip population but altered them causing "flames" of color to appear upon the petals. The color patterns came in a wide variety, increasing the rarity of an already unique flower. Thus, tulips, which were already selling at a premium, began to rise in price according to how their virus alterations were valued, or desired. Everyone began to deal in bulbs, essentially speculating on the tulip market, which was believed to have no limits.

The true bulb buyers (*the garden centers of the past*) began to fill up inventories for the growing season, depleting the supply further and increasing scarcity and demand. Soon, prices were rising so fast and high that people were trading their land, life savings, and anything else they could liquidate to get more tulip bulbs. Many Dutch persisted in believing they would sell their hoard to hapless and unenlightened foreigners, thereby reaping enormous profits. Somehow, the originally overpriced tulips enjoyed a twenty-fold increase in value – in one month! A single Viceroy Tulip bulb would sell for 2500 florins a value roughly equivalent to \$1,250 in current American dollars, while a rarer Semper Augustus bulb could easily go for twice that.

Needless to say, the prices were not an accurate reflection of the value of a tulip bulb. As it happens in many speculative bubbles, some prudent people decided to sell and crystallize their profits. A domino effect of progressively lower and lower prices took place as everyone tried to sell while not many were buying. The price began to dive, causing people to panic and sell regardless of losses.

Dealers refused to honor contracts and people began to realize they traded their homes for a piece of greenery; panic and pandemonium were prevalent throughout the land. The government attempted to step in and halt the crash by offering to honor contracts at 10% of the face value, but then the market plunged even lower, making such restitution impossible. No one emerged unscathed from the crash. Even the people who had locked in their profit by getting out early suffered under the following depression. The effects of the tulip craze left the Dutch very hesitant about speculative investments for quite some time. Investors now can know that it is better to stop and smell the flowers than to stake your future upon one.

The later part of the 20th century saw its share of odd financial bubbles. There was the real-estate bubble, the stock market bubbles, and the dot com bubble, just to name a few. In each instance of price inflation people paid exorbitant amounts for things that shouldn't have been worth anything like the going price. And each time people stood around afterwards and said "*What were we thinking?*" Currently with De Beers and a number of banks holding tens of billions of dollars in diamonds off the market in an endeavor to keep up the prices, while other producers are threatening to flood the market with diamonds from their mines and synthetic man made diamonds which are almost indistinguishable from those created by Mother Nature gobbling up the bottom end of the market you can almost see the handwriting that its cartel days are weaning if not close to being over. Consequently, there is a big chance that the diamond that you purchase today is going to be worth significantly less when you try to sell it in the future. For more information please download the attached, **Fun Facts About Diamonds**.

We're Learning More From Stephen Colbert Than The Actual News, Study Says



Web Link:

[ir=media](#)

Want to be more informed about what's going on in the world? The findings of a new study suggest that watching Stephen Colbert might help you more than actual news programs. A recent study concluded that "**The Colbert Report**" did a better job of teaching people about campaign finance in the last presidential election than **MSNBC, CNN, Fox News** or broadcast evening news. The study — published in *Mass Communication and Society* and led by a senior researcher at the University of Pennsylvania — surveyed 1,232 adults and tested respondents' knowledge of campaign finance from a variety of sources.

"The Colbert Report not only increased people's perceptions that they knew more about political financing, but significantly increased their actual knowledge, and did so at a greater rate than other news sources," the university's **Annenberg Public Policy Center** wrote in a statement. The study is not the first that concludes viewers of fake news shows like "**The Colbert Report**" are more informed than those of other news sources. In 2012, another study found that people who watch "**The Daily Show**" are more informed than people who watch **Fox News**.



One of the most relevant investigative journalist today is **Rolling Stone** Matt Taibbi whose latest book **The Divide: American Injustice in the Age of the Wealth Gap** is a 2014 non-fiction book about income inequality in the United States and its impact on the American conception of justice and the legal system. The book illustrates the "divide" by looking at the relationship between growing income inequality and the criminalization of poverty, as poor people are increasingly harassed, arrested and imprisoned for minor crimes in the U.S., sometimes for no actual crime at all, even as crime rates continue to plummet, resulting in a prison population that *"is now the biggest in the history of human civilization."* At the same time, Taibbi writes, white-collar criminals who continue to defraud the financial system avoid punishment, allowing them to accumulate even more wealth without fear of future prosecution. Taibbi argues that as a result of this divide, money has now redefined the meaning of justice, distorting the very notion of American citizenship and challenging the founding ideals of its nation. **The Los Angeles Times** called the book *"advocacy journalism at its finest, an attempt to stir us up."*

The Justice Gap. *“Low-class people do low-class things.”* What’s notable in this reflexive dismissal of those with modest means are not the words themselves. Rather, please turn your attention to the person whom Matt Taibbi, in his ambitious new book documenting America’s unequal administration of justice to rich and poor, quotes saying them: a private attorney hired by New York State to defend low-income people in criminal court. We never learn his name, but Taibbi calls him Waldorf because he resembles the grouchy old balcony heckler on *“The Muppet Show.”* Waldorf’s casual contempt for his defendants (and tacit approval of the sloppy policing dragnet that puts them at his mercy) is voiced at the conclusion of a grimly comic vignette worthy of Joseph Heller — one of many deeply reported, highly compelling mini-narratives of dysfunction within the criminal justice system that make **“The Divide: American Injustice in the Age of the Wealth Gap”** as infuriating as it is impossible to put down.

A 35-year-old black man named Andrew Brown is arrested for *“obstructing pedestrian traffic”* in Bedford-Stuyvesant. Brown, having been similarly harassed by the cops countless times before, refuses to provide ID and accept a summons, and is consequently brought into court. Once there, Brown explains to Waldorf that he was talking to a friend outside his own apartment building after getting off work, and that, given the lateness of the hour (shortly before 1 ■■■.), there wouldn’t have been any pedestrian traffic on Myrtle Avenue to obstruct. None of this seems to register with Waldorf. *“What are you arguing?”* he asks. He wonders aloud whether Brown was *“being a wise guy”* with the cops, and expresses surprise that a person such as Brown would have a job. He advises his client to pay the \$25 fine. Brown refuses and explains it all over again to the judge. The judge turns to Waldorf and asks whether Brown will pay the \$25 fine. Waldorf explains, for the second time that Brown won’t pay, his manner suggesting that for the life of him he can’t figure out why not. Only then does the judge bestir himself to ask the arresting officer whether he saw any other people on the sidewalk that night. No? *“O.K., then,”* the judge sighs. *“Not guilty.”* Out in the hallway, Taibbi asks Waldorf why white people never get arrested for obstructing pedestrian traffic. Oblivious to the lesson that has just played out, and puzzled as to why Taibbi would want to include any of this in a book, Waldorf replies, *“Low-class people do low-class things.”*

Taibbi wrote **“The Divide”** to demonstrate that unequal wealth is producing grotesquely unequal outcomes in criminal justice. You might say that’s an old story, but Taibbi believes that, just as income disparities are growing ever wider, so, too, are disparities in who attracts the attention of cops and prosecutors and who doesn’t. Violent crime has fallen by 44 percent in America over the past two decades, but during that same period the prison population has more than doubled, skewing heavily black and poor. In essence, poverty itself is being criminalized. Meanwhile, at the other end of the income distribution, an epidemic of white-collar crime has overtaken the financial sector, indicated, for instance, by a proliferation of record-breaking civil settlements. But partly because of an embarrassing succession of botched Justice Department prosecutions, and partly because of a growing worry (first enunciated by Attorney General Eric Holder when he was Bill Clinton’s deputy attorney general) that any aggressive prosecution of big banks could destabilize the economy, Wall Street has come under President Obama, to enjoy near-total immunity from prosecution. It had more to fear, ironically, when George W. Bush was President.

The argument isn’t laid out in a particularly rigorous or nuanced manner, but it seems plausible enough. Taibbi, a longtime Rolling Stone writer who is currently developing a publication about political and financial corruption for **First Look Media**, has in the past written in a blustery style that put me off, but here the gonzo affectation is kept largely in check. What I failed to notice previously — or perhaps what Taibbi shows off to especially good effect here — is what a meticulous reporter he can be, with a facility for rendering complex financial skullduggery intelligible. Especially noteworthy are Taibbi’s detailed accounts of self-- dealing amid the dismantlement of Lehman Brothers — which involved, among other things, hoodwinking Lehman’s bankruptcy judge — and of a

vicious harassment campaign waged by hedge fund managers against the employees of a Canadian insurance company whose stock █████ shorted. In both instances, one is struck that, however tricky the standard of proof may be for the white-collar criminal class, the evidence available nowadays in the form of compromising email communications would make Eliot Ness weep with gratitude. And yet the gangsters got away. Taibbi is similarly skillful at explaining how bureaucratic imperatives in the criminal justice system can spin scarily out of control. In New York City, you start with a “*broken windows*” theory that says cracking down on petty crime can prevent little criminals from becoming big criminals.

Taibbi is a relentless investigative reporter. He takes readers inside not only investment banks, hedge funds and the blood sport of short-sellers, but into the lives of the needy, minorities, street drifters and illegal immigrants, to juxtapose justice for the poor and the powerful. How can it be, he asks, that a street drifter such as Tory Marone serves 40 days in jail after cops find half a reefer in his pocket, but not a single executive of HSBC faces criminal charges after the bank “*admitted to laundering billions of dollars for drug cartels in Mexico and Colombia, washing money for terrorist-connected organizations in the Middle East, allowing rogue states under formal sanctions by the U.S. government to move money freely by the tens of billions through its American subsidiary, [and] letting Russian mobsters wash money on a grand scale*”?

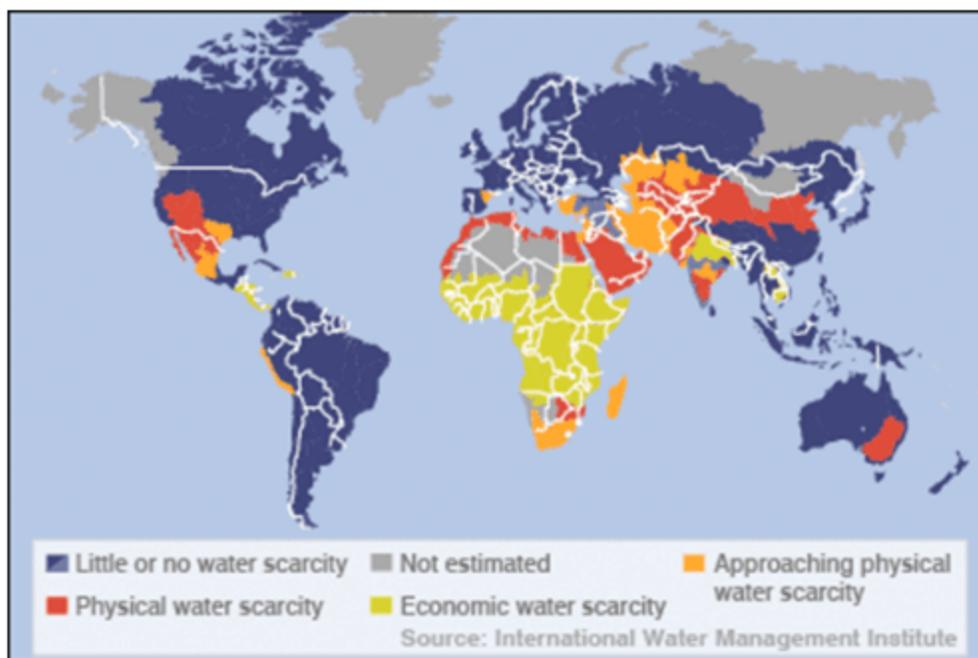
To those who see welfare fraud as routine, Taibbi counters that “*every day on Wall Street, money is stolen, embezzled, burgled, and robbed. But the mechanisms of these thefts are often so arcane and idiosyncratic that they don’t fit neatly into the criminal code, which is written for the dumb crimes committed by common stick-up artists and pickpockets.*” He provides a litany of big-time financial cheating: the fraud at Countrywide under former chief executive Angelo Mozilo; the \$4 billion bank swindle in Barclays’s buyout of Lehman Brothers; the fraudulent finagling of the London Interbank Offered Rate, the north star of global interest rates, that hurt billions of borrowers; and the massive mortgage fraud perpetrated by megabanks on tens of thousands of illegally foreclosed U.S. homeowners. In the 21 biggest settlements of mortgage-fraud abuses, companies paid damages of \$26 billion to the government. But, Taibbi writes, “*not a single individual was charged in any of those cases. Not a single individual had to pay so much as a dime of his own money in damages. Not one home was searched.*”

The contrast with how the poor are treated is striking. Taibbi tells story after story of Harlem residents hauled in and strip-searched for “*blocking pedestrian traffic,*” or welfare applicants subjected to intrusive, humiliating searches of their homes, investigators poking into their closets, their dresser drawers, and their underwear. Jail terms face those who lie about whether a boyfriend is still living at home or who receive more than the legal welfare benefit, even if the state caused the overpayment. But on Wall Street, Holder’s hallmark has been fines and deferred prosecution, dangling hypothetical future prosecution but in fact letting the managers of massive fraud off the hook. Taibbi sees the origins of this approach in Holder’s doctrine of “*collateral consequences,*” which he first propounded as a White House aide to President Bill Clinton in 1999. In deciding whether to charge a bank or a corporation with a criminal offense, Holder wrote, the prosecutor should consider “*the possibly substantial consequences to a corporation’s officers, directors, employees, and shareholders.*”

Collateral consequences has been Holder’s mantra as attorney general, abetted by former Treasury secretary Tim Geithner’s fear that the economy was too fragile to endure criminal prosecution of a major bank. The touchstone becomes not the law but the impact on financial markets. What’s more, Taibbi suggests, social-class loyalty and legal clubbiness have affected Holder and his criminal division chief, Lanny Breuer. Covington and Burling, the revolving-door Washington law firm where Holder

and Breuer worked between stints in government, was the top corporate defense firm used by virtually all the banks involved in major fraud cases. This elitist fraternity makes a semantic and legal distinction, without a real difference, between what it sees as “breaking the law” (white-collar crime, meriting fines) and “committing a crime” (petty crime, requiring prosecution). “They just can’t see certain behavior as criminal,” Taibbi comments. More harshly, Taibbi contends that Holder and Co. were cowardly — reluctant to take on megabanks and their armies of lawyers for fear of losing and hurting their legal success record. He mocks their claim that they always lacked sufficient evidence: *“Every single time, the state lands itself in that oddly enormous sweet spot between spectacular leverage (to extract fines) and no leverage at all (to hand down criminal penalties).”*

“The Divide” is an important book. Its documentation is powerful and shocking. But it can ramble off track, as Taibbi falls in love with a story or a character. Its logic is sometimes diminished by his understandable rage at unethical, though probably not illegal, behavior. His periodic tirades against American justice as *“a sci-fi movie, a dystopia,”* distract from the force of his argument. But he drives home the telling point that the wealth-driven dichotomy in our legal system stems from our bending the law to match our social attitudes. *“The rich have always gotten breaks and the poor have always had to swim upstream,”* he concedes. *“The new truth is infinitely darker and more twisted.”* Today, he concludes, *“the rule of law has slowly been replaced by giant idiosyncratic bureaucracies that are designed to criminalize failure, poverty, and weakness on the one hand, and to immunize strength, wealth and success on the other.”*



Water scarcity is the lack of sufficient available water resources to meet the demands of water usage within a region. It already affects every continent and around 2.8 billion people around the world at least one month out of every year. More than 1.2 billion people lack access to clean drinking water. Water scarcity involves water stress, water shortage or deficits, and water crisis. While the concept of water stress is relatively new, it is the difficulty of obtaining sources of fresh water for use during a period of time and may result in further depletion and deterioration of available water resources. Water shortages may be caused by climate change, such as altered weather patterns including droughts or floods, increased pollution, and increased human demand and overuse of water. A water crisis is a situation where the available potable, unpolluted water within a region is less than that region's demand. Water scarcity is being driven by two converging phenomena: growing freshwater

use and depletion of usable freshwater resources. Water scarcity can be a result of two mechanisms: physical (absolute) water scarcity and economic water scarcity, where physical water scarcity is a result of inadequate natural water resources to supply a region's demand, and economic water scarcity is a result of poor management of the sufficient available water resources. According to the United Nations Development Programme, the latter is found more often to be the cause of countries or regions experiencing water scarcity, as most countries or regions have enough water to meet household, industrial, agricultural, and environmental needs, but lack the means to provide it in an accessible manner.

Although more than 2/3s of the earth's surface is covered by water, more than 99 percent of Earth's bountiful water supply is unfit for drinking. Most of it, 97 percent, is saltwater, with another 2 percent locked up in ice caps and glaciers. Getting the remaining water from its source to the people who need it every day is an increasingly complex task. Now, for the first time, a team of researchers has mapped the water sources of more than 500 cities, finding that cities move 200,000 Olympic swimming pools' worth of water almost 17,000 miles every day. The researchers, led by hydrologist Rob McDonald, used computer models to show that about 25 percent of cities use at least 40 percent of their available water, meaning they are under water stress. Previous estimates had the number of water-stressed cities as high as 40 percent.

Some large cities depend on water underground, known as groundwater, and a select few turn the ocean's salty water into drinkable water, a process called desalination. But the majority of the cities studied, almost 80 percent, largely use surface water — reservoirs, lakes and other water sources on the Earth's surface, which are more susceptible to immediate changes in weather, like droughts, McDonald said. *"A city like San Antonio that's using groundwater, if there's a two-week drought in San Antonio it doesn't really affect their water supply,"* McDonald told [REDACTED] *"Atlanta is an example of a city that uses surface water, and they don't have a ton of storage, so a short-term drought can get them in some trouble."*

Ultimately, McDonald said, climate change will affect both sources, as the extremes of wet and dry start to become more intense. Globally, this will be more difficult for poorer cities with fast-growing populations, who don't have the income to keep up with developing infrastructure. More economically secure cities, like those in China and the United States, have a better capacity to plan for and adapt to climate change. Southern California has arguably the biggest water system in the world, McDonald said, with China building a huge new system to bring water from the south to the north. *"[In California] you do get some big rain events...but the dry season is going to be very dry in California now,"* McDonald said. *"And so all of those California cities, they either need to have more storage of water or they need to start thinking about other sources."*

Many of the mega-cities in the Developing Countries are stressing water resources, these cities include Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Tianjin in China, Tokyo, Japan, Mexico City, Mexico, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Moscow, Russia, Lima, Peru, London England, Delhi, India, Karachi, Pakistan, Istanbul, Turkey and Los Angeles here in the United States. And Yemen is the first country that could potentially run out of water with its streams and natural aquifers shallower every day, Sana'a itself risks becoming the first capital in the world to run out of a viable water supply within 10 years. The water table in the city has dropped far beyond sustainable levels, El Shami said, because of an exploding population, lack of water resource management and, most of all, unregulated drilling. Where Sana'a's water table was 30 meters below the surface in the 1970s, he said, it has now dropped to 1,200 meters in some areas. Lack of access to improved water supply has been responsible for the spread of water-borne diseases on a scale not witnessed in decades, according to UNICEF's Madieh. Dengue fever, diarrhea and cholera, for example, have spread at alarming rates in rural areas where access to clean water is limited. In 2011 alone, more than 30,000 Yemenis were suffering from acute watery diarrhea.

The vast majority of the water in Yemen – as much as 90 percent – goes to small-scale farming, at a time when agriculture contributes only 6 percent of GDP. Though few precise statistics are available on the subject, 50 percent of all agricultural water goes to the cultivation of khat, a narcotic plant chewed by most Yemenis. As such, almost 45 percent of all water in Yemen is used to cultivate a plant that feeds no one, in a country where almost half of the population is food insecure. While the water situation in many cities is dire, it is even more distressing in rural areas. According to the latest rural water survey by GRWA, completed this year, access to improved water supply - piped water, protected springs and wells - is limited to 34 percent of rural areas, compared to 70 percent of urban areas. Village women spend most of each day trekking many kilometers along unpaved roads to reach the few wells that have not yet run dry. Many of them also collect water from streams polluted by waste, which they attempt to eliminate with rudimentary filtering systems.

In addition to dwindling water resources more than 3.4 million people die each year from water, sanitation, and hygiene-related causes. Nearly all deaths, 99 percent, occur in the developing world. Lack of access to clean water and sanitation kills children at a rate equivalent of a jumbo jet crashing every four hours. Of the 60 million people added to the world's towns and cities every year, most move to informal settlements (i.e. slums) with no sanitation facilities. 780 million people lack access to an improved water source; approximately one in nine people. *"[The water and sanitation] crisis claims more lives through disease than any war claims through guns."* An American taking a five-minute shower uses more water than the average person in a developing country slum uses for an entire day. Over 2.5X more people lack water than live in the United States. More people have a mobile phone than a toilet.

Water is going to increasingly become a bigger and bigger problem on every continent. Although Climate Change will continue to be a driving factor, the vast migration of people from rural to urban in developing countries is even a larger driving factor. And when you couple this with mismanagement and poor planning water insecurity will most likely reach a crisis state on every continent within the next two decades. We have to ask why this looming crisis is not receiving the attention required if there is a hope in hell for America to get a head start addressing this serious issue and for other countries as well. And where is the support for a water project, akin to the Keystone Pipeline? Finally, between cheaper crude oil or clean water which one do you think is more important?

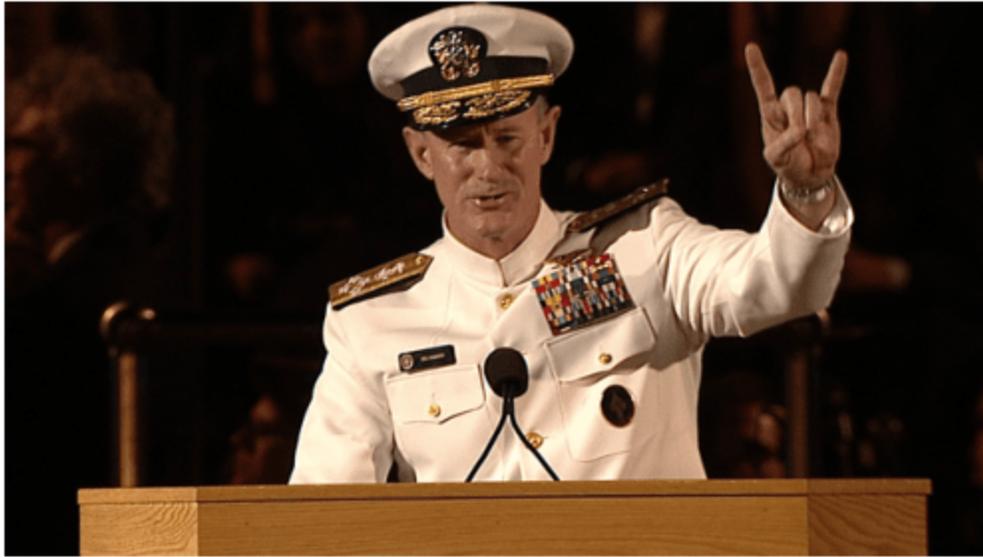
THIS WEEK'S QUOTE

"We have a profound hatred for the weak and the poor, and a corresponding groveling terror before the rich and successful, and we're building a bureaucracy to match those feelings."

Matt Taibbi, "The Divide"

INSPIRATIONAL VIDEO OF THE WEEK

He Gave A Very Inspiring Speech About 10 Lessons On How To Live A Good Life.

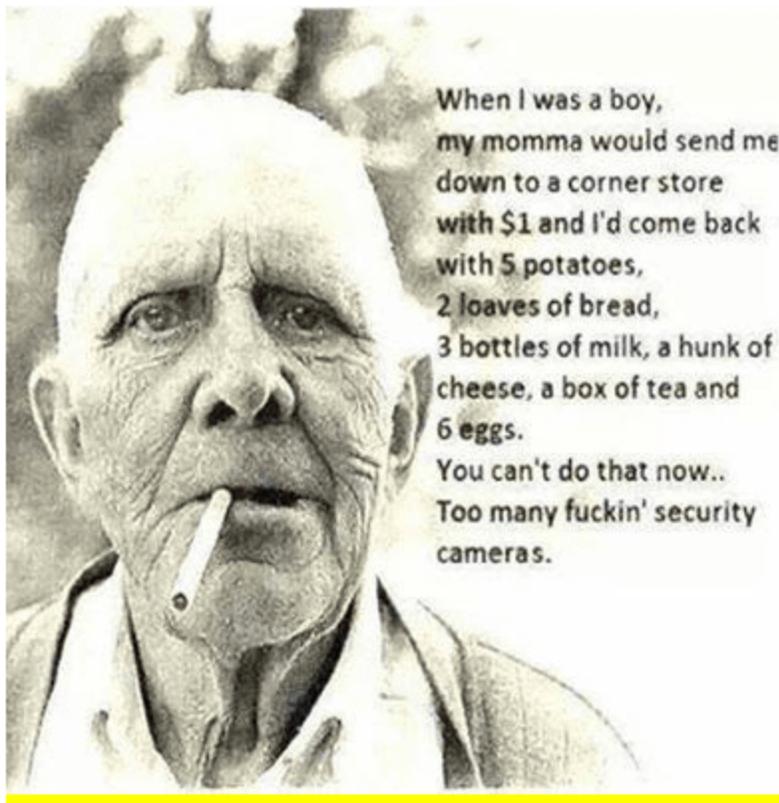


Video Link: <http://youtu.be/pxBQLFLei70>

Adm. William H. McRaven, who has a career so accomplished I wouldn't know where to begin, has been a Navy SEAL for 36 years. He returned to his alma mater, the University of Texas at Austin, and gave the 2014 commencement address. It's full of wisdom and delivered with the perfect amount of humor. I urge everyone to listen and enjoy.....

FUNNY..... FUNNY..... FUNNY.....

The Purchasing Power of \$1 in early 20th Century



THIS WEEK'S MUSIC

José James



Last week while selecting the music for last week's offering featuring the multi-talented Terence Blanchard who provided the score for my film *SUGARHILL*, I included several songs from the movie included the delightful *Park Bench People*. And during this process I discovered a wonderful not-well-known musician José James who blew me away for his jazzy freshness that at times reminds me of a young Gil Scott Heron with the pallet of a [REDACTED] and the soul of a Meshell Ndegeocello. James is an American vocalist best known for performing and blending modern jazz and hip-hop. He performs all over the world both as a

leader and with other groups, as well as collaborating with everyone from Junior Mance, Chico Hamilton, McCoy Tyner and Jev Neve. He attended **The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music**. In 2008, he debuted with his first album, *The Dreamer* in 2010 and later the same year, *For All We Know* which was followed by *Black Magic*. *For All We Know* became the winner of both the **Edison Award** and **L'Académie du Jazz Grand Prix for best Vocal Jazz Album of 2010**. These were followed by the release of *While You Were Sleeping*. In 2012 James released *No Beginning No End*. With this said I invite you to enjoy the music of José James.

Jose James – *Do you Feel* -- <http://youtu.be/uvLjufvdbZ0>

Jose James – *Come to my Door, Live on* -- <http://youtu.be/yFLWHZr8m7w>

José James – *Park Bench People* (live version From SUGARHILL film & album) --

José James – *Moanin'* -- <http://youtu.be/cZ9XnEDvQl0>

José James – *The Dreamer* -- http://youtu.be/Ctn36m_0Q_c

José James & Jef Neve – *Embraceable You* -- <http://youtu.be/xw6VG7vXAsw>

José James & Emily King – *Heaven On The Ground* -- <http://youtu.be/RICtUIIVOBE>

José James – *Simply Beautiful* -- <http://youtu.be/aINqXnnRoqg>

José James – *Ain't no Sunshine, Who is he, No Diggity* -- <http://youtu.be/-zAHs6wrz64>

José James – *Save Your Love For Me* -- <http://youtu.be/FD57K5EcqDo>

José James – *I Want You* -- <http://youtu.be/zXQvYP2duuQ>

José James – *Trouble* -- <http://youtu.be/a-nM7UtXFsw>

José James – *It's All Over Your Body* -- <http://youtu.be/K3lOMyo1uqk>

José James – *Bird of Space* -- http://youtu.be/_xTrNLXAAK8

I hope that you enjoyed this week's offerings and wish you and yours a great week.... And for all of you Dads..... HAPPY FATHER'S DAY.....

Sincerely,

Greg Brown

--

Gregory Brown
Chairman & CEO
GlobalCast Partners, LLC

